

Growing and Sustaining Compassionate Communities

2023 Forum Summary Report

April 2024

GROWING AND SUSTAINING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES:
2023 FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

Table of Contents

Land Acknowledgement	3
Compassionate Communities Forum	4
Background	4
2023 Forum: Growing and Sustaining Compassionate Communities	4
Program Highlights	5
Participants	6
Evaluation	8
Learnings	11
Next Steps	12
Conclusion	12

Land Acknowledgement

Covenant Health acknowledges that the land we call Alberta is on Treaty 6, 7 and 8 territory and the traditional home of many Indigenous Peoples, including the Blackfoot, Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, Tsuu T'ina and Métis.

We recognize and give thanks to the many Indigenous Peoples who have cared for these lands for generations, and to the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and who have gone before us.

We make this acknowledgement in gratitude and humility and in hope of reconciliation.



Compassionate Communities Forum

Background

The Compassionate Communities movement recognizes illness, dying and grief as part of life and encourages everyone to play a part in caring for those going through these experiences. Compassionate Communities build "circles of care" around people who are sick and dying, and those closest to them. They complement health services and expand the community's capacity to care for people facing serious illness.

The 2023 Compassionate Communities Forum was the Covenant Health Palliative Institute's second event of this kind. The inaugural event took place on March 19, 2022 and centred on the theme of ***Building Compassionate Communities***. Goals for this event included bringing together stakeholders with an interest in supporting Albertans through serious illness, dying, caregiving and grief, raising awareness of the Compassionate Communities movement, and inviting feedback on the resources under development by the Palliative Institute. The 2022 Forum featured inspiring keynotes by international leaders in the Compassionate Communities movement, including Dr. Allan Kellehear, Dr. Cathy Payne from the All-Ireland Institute for Hospice and Palliative Care, and Shyla Mills from Palliative Care Queensland.

The learnings and next steps from this forum were summarized in an [action planning report](#), which includes 11 recommendations that have guided the work of the Covenant Health Palliative Institute since that time. An addendum to this report that provides a progress update on each of these recommendations is [available here](#).

2023 Forum: Growing and Sustaining Compassionate Communities

The Covenant Health Palliative Institute's second forum occurred on November 30, 2023 with the theme of ***Growing and Sustaining Compassionate Communities***. As with the inaugural event, this forum was hosted virtually and was free to attend for all participants. While the primary audience was community organizations, other audiences included health care, continuing care and social workers; legal, financial advising, funeral planning, and other business professionals; as well as volunteers, caregivers, and members of the public.

Objectives for this event included:

- Bringing together key stakeholders and partners in Alberta's Compassionate Communities movement and providing a venue for networking and idea sharing.
- Highlighting the work of Compassionate Community champions across Alberta.
- Sharing the tools and resources we [the Palliative Institute] have developed to raise awareness of palliative care and advance care planning and supporting our partners in leveraging these resources.

GROWING AND SUSTAINING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES: 2023 FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

Program Highlights

Dr. Shane Sinclair, founder and director of the Compassion Research Lab in Alberta, offered the opening keynote address. His presentation, entitled '*When is a compassionate community a compassionate community?*', framed the day for participants by defining compassion and translating his research on compassion in the health care environment to the community setting.

Interactive workshops allowed participants to learn about and, in some cases experience, five tools adapted or developed by the Covenant Health Palliative Institute to normalize conversations about death and dying (Workshop 1: Death Café), build community support for people who are sick, dying, caregiving or grieving (Workshop 2: PalliLearn), learn about palliative care and participate in advance care planning (Workshop 3: Understanding Palliative Care + Plan Ahead Toolkit + My Wishes Alberta).

A new addition at this year's forum was the Compassionate Communities Showcase. While the 2022 Forum

Compassionate Communities Showcase Presenters

PALLIATIVE CARE SOCIETY OF THE BOW VALLEY

Understanding the Palliative Care Landscape in the Bow Valley

IMAGINE INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING

Free Mental Health First Aid Supporting Older Adults Training

MULTICULTURAL HEALTH BROKERS

Multicultural Seniors Outreach Program

ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF ALBERTA AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Seeds of Hope Learning Series

ALBERTA HOSPICE PALLIATIVE CARE ASSOCIATION

Palliative Care Training for the Community

HOSPICE CALGARY

Companion Program

EDMONTON PEOPLE IN NEED SHELTER SOCIETY

Providing Palliative Care in the Inner City

CAREGIVERS ALBERTA

Living with Grief and Loss

FOOTHILLS COUNTRY HOSPICE SOCIETY

Beyond Hospice: Empowering Rural Communities

PILGRIMS HOSPICE SOCIETY

Enhanced Resident, Caregiver, and Grief Group Participant Experience Through Music Therapy

WELLSPRING ALBERTA

Living with a Cancer That May Never Go Away (In Community)

MODERN CAREGIVING SOLUTIONS

Multilingual PEOLC Microlearning Courses

GROWING AND SUSTAINING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES: 2023 FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

highlighted international Compassionate Community initiatives, the 2023 Forum focused on work taking place in Alberta. In advance of the forum, we invited Alberta-based organizations to submit proposals outlining a program or initiative that exemplifies Compassionate Communities. Twelve initiatives were selected for participation in three concurrent Showcase sessions.

The Community Voices Panel, moderated by Calgary-based journalist and author Christina Frangou, provided an opportunity to hear personal stories of how Compassionate Communities make a difference in people's lives.

A one-hour session towards the end of the program provided space for participants to network, share their learnings, and plan for action in their communities.

Dr. Naheed Dosani delivered the closing keynote address on the topic of '*Living and dying on the streets: Towards health justice through a palliative care approach*'. As a palliative care physician and founder of the Palliative Education and Care for the Homeless (PEACH) program in Toronto, Dr. Dosani shared his experiences and left participants with ten considerations for how they can foster and promote health justice among those living with or impacted by a life-limiting diagnosis.

Participants

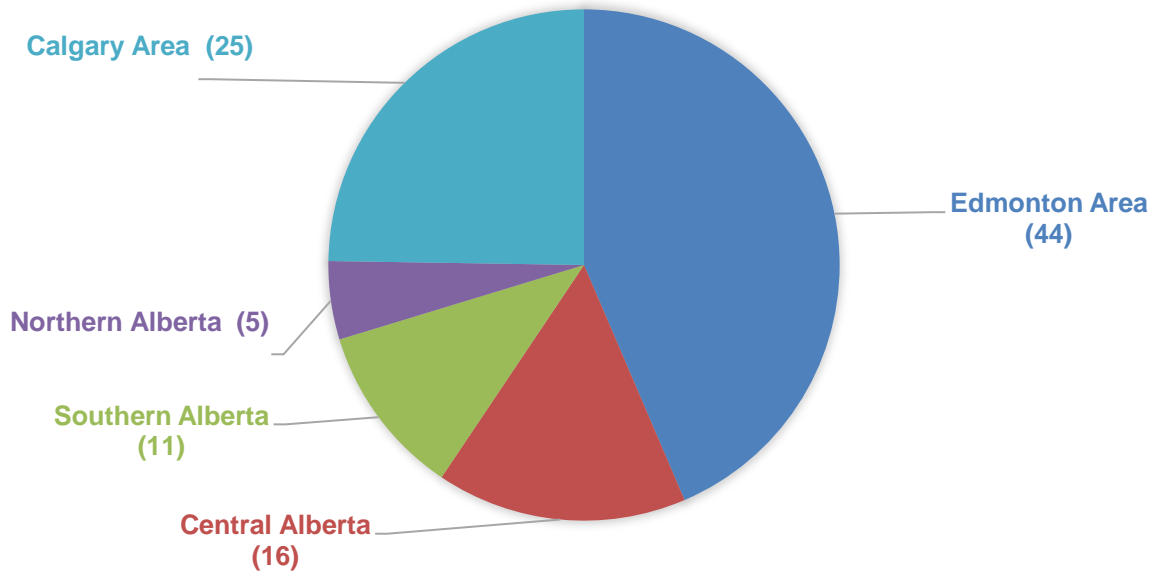
The forum was attended by 150 individuals, over two-thirds of whom joined from Alberta.

Participants by Locations	
Alberta	105
Ontario	3
British Columbia	3
Manitoba	4
Nova Scotia	2
Prince Edward Island	2
Newfoundland & Labrador	1
International	2
Unknown	28
TOTAL	150

While many were based in Alberta's urban centres such as Edmonton and Calgary, there was also representation from smaller communities based throughout southern, central, and northern Alberta. Of the 105 participants who joined us from across Alberta, 101 shared where from Alberta they were located.

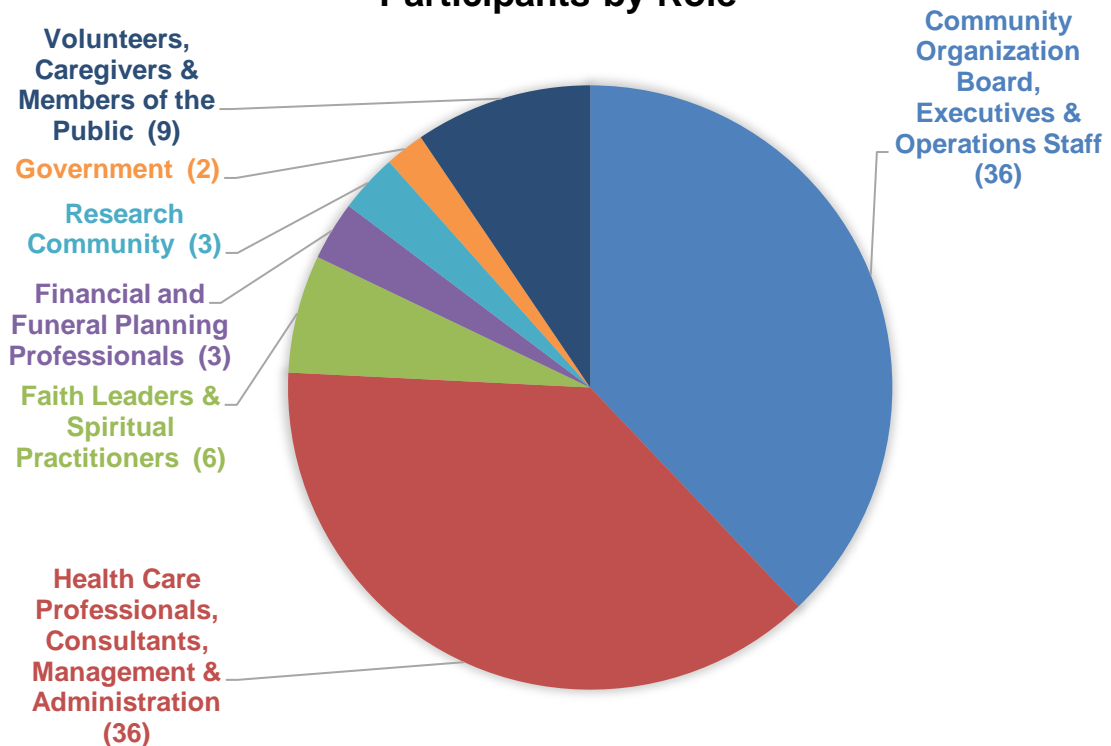
GROWING AND SUSTAINING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES: 2023 FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

Alberta-based Participants by Region



Participants represented a diversity of sectors and occupied a variety of roles.

Participants by Role

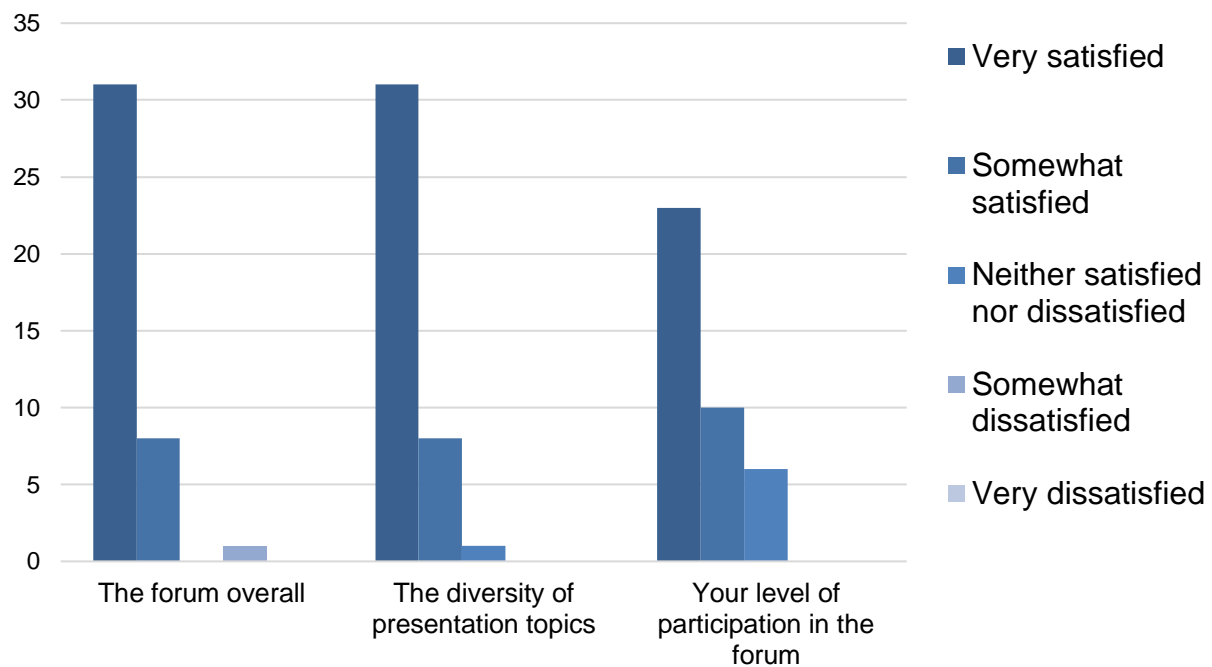


GROWING AND SUSTAINING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES: 2023 FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

Evaluation

An evaluation survey was distributed to attendees immediately following the event. A total of 40 out of 150 participants (27%) completed the survey. Overall satisfaction with the event and the diversity of presentation topics was very high, with over 75% of respondents responding that they were 'very satisfied' to both questions. Satisfaction in the level of participation was somewhat lower but still positive.

How satisfied were you with:

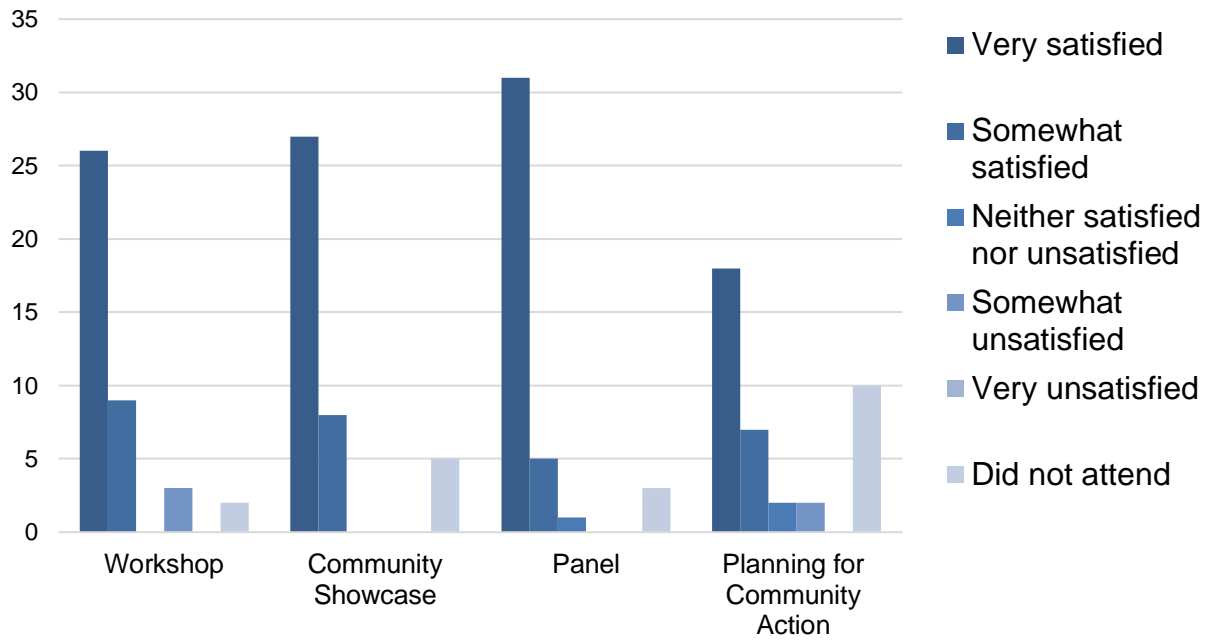


With regard to the four primary sessions of the day, the Community Voices Panel received the highest satisfaction ratings, followed by the Compassionate Communities Showcase, demonstrating that participants particularly enjoyed those parts of the program where they heard from other individuals and organizations about their experiences and the work they are engaged in.

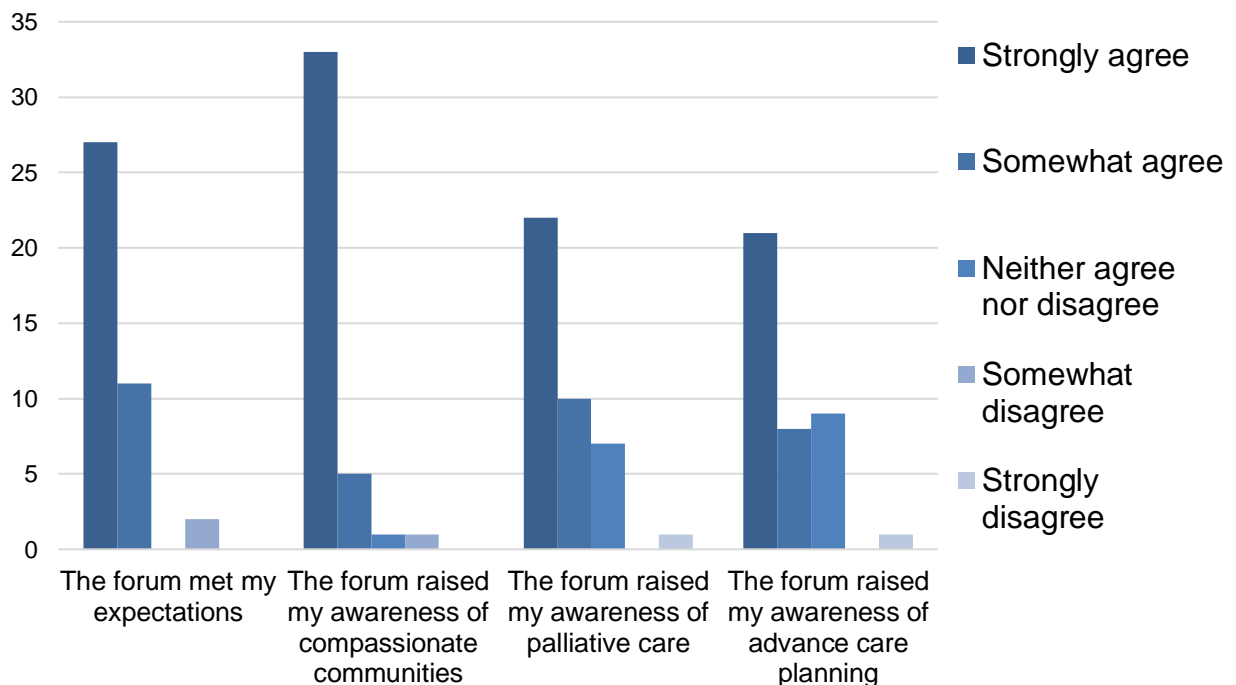
As one goal of this event was to increase awareness of advance care planning and palliative care, participants were asked to evaluate whether their awareness of these topics as well as the concept of compassionate communities increased as a result of attending. More than half of all participants 'strongly agreed' that their awareness was increased for each topic, with 82.5% of respondents sharing that their awareness of compassionate communities in particular increased as a result of this forum.

GROWING AND SUSTAINING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES: 2023 FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

How satisfied were you with:



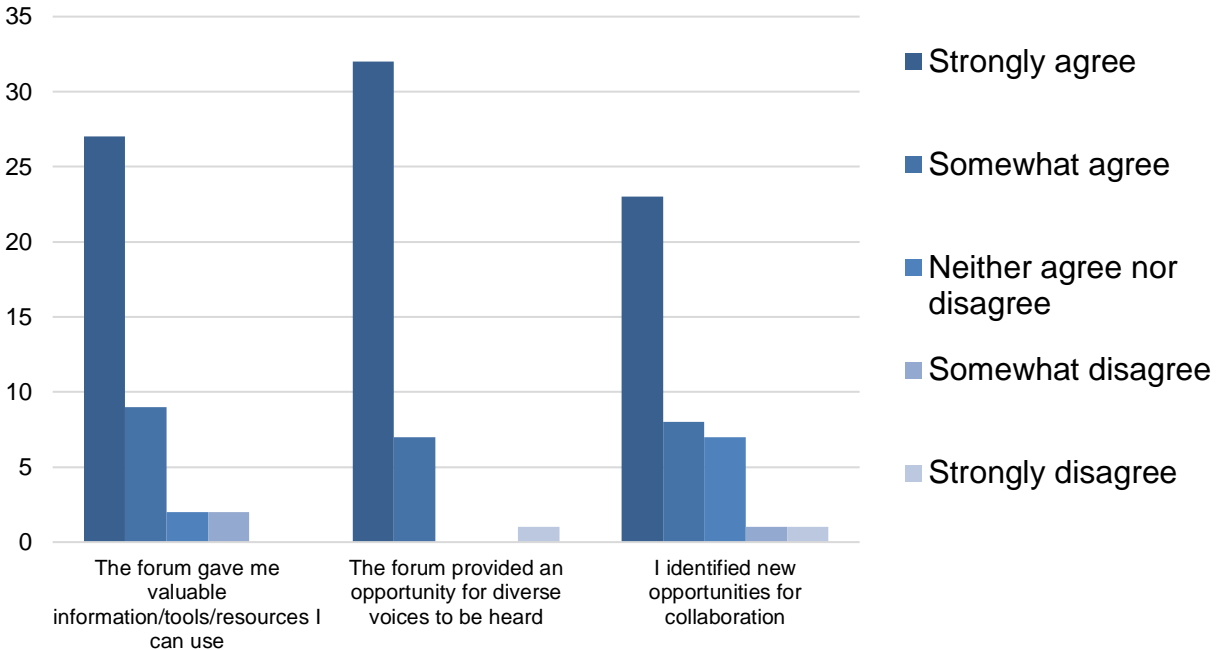
How much do you agree/disagree:



GROWING AND SUSTAINING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES: 2023 FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

A large majority of respondents indicated the event gave them valuable information, tools, and/or resources they could utilize, and that the forum provided an opportunity to hear from diverse voices. Just over half of respondents 'strongly agreed' that the forum helped them identify new opportunities for collaboration.

How much do you agree/disagree:



Learnings

There is a strong appetite among Alberta-based community organizations, professionals, and the public to empower and contribute to Compassionate Communities, and to collaborate in raising awareness of palliative care and advance care planning. In particular, participants valued hearing personal stories of how Compassionate Communities supported people through sickness, death and grief, as well learning about the work many Alberta-based organizations are doing to put compassion into action in their communities.

The number of organizations that submitted proposals to share their initiatives as part of the Compassionate Communities Showcase was both enlightening and encouraging. These initiatives and the contributions of the twelve groups that had the opportunity to speak to the forum audience about their work demonstrated that diverse sectors are already engaged in the work of growing and elevating Compassionate Communities in Alberta.

Efforts to foster Compassionate Communities remains an effective means for bringing Albertans together to share learnings, coordinate efforts, and network with individuals and organizations interested in making an impact. One critique of the latest forum was that participants would have liked more of an opportunity to engage and participate with the speakers, presenters and their fellow attendees, demonstrating the importance of having time for questions and answers following each presentation and providing more means to engage virtually with the content. This feedback will guide our approach going forward and we recommend other community organizations consider this when hosting community-focused events.

Participant Insights

“Appreciated the speakers, also really loved hearing from the attendees and all their shares. Really lovely to see the collaboration.”

“The panel discussion was absolutely full of practical information provided by a diverse panel with shared but differing experiences. Enjoyed both Dr. Sinclair and Dr. Dosani's presentations as well. What great work that is being done.”

“Most valuable was hearing the diversity of peoples stories around death and dying - the variety of experiences.”

“Truly appreciated this forum - super inspiring! Very appreciative of and excited about all that respective initiatives and organizations are doing, across Alberta, Canada, and globally, to evolve towards more and more compassionate communities.”

GROWING AND SUSTAINING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES: 2023 FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

Next Steps

The Covenant Health Palliative Institute will continue to engage with those groups, professionals, and individuals across Alberta who might be better supported by one or more of our five tools or the many other resources available on CompassionateAlberta.ca. As we recognize that Compassionate Communities initiatives are already taking place across the province, we are also committed to continuing to share these opportunities with as many Albertans as possible.

Participants and other interested individuals are encouraged to check out the Compassionate Alberta website. This website hosts not only our five tools but also links to the numerous resources championed by other organizations across the province that support people in times of serious illness, grief, and loss. In the spirit of the Compassionate Communities movement, the website is designed to elevate the great work done by others while providing resources and support to fill the gaps.

We are always interested in hearing about what other organizations are doing to promote Compassionate Communities, and welcome feedback on what we at the Covenant Health Palliative Institute could be doing differently. Please reach out to share with us any insights you might have by emailing Palliative.Institute@covenanthealth.ca.

Conclusion

While more needs to be done to grow and sustain Compassionate Communities across the province, countless individuals, groups, and organizations are already engaged in this important work and we are grateful for their continued efforts. We are pleased that the Compassionate Communities Forum was an opportunity to bring some of these contributors together to share learnings, celebrate successes, and plan for future action.

The Covenant Health Palliative Institute remains committed to empowering those in Alberta and elsewhere in their efforts to expand the reach of this movement and support individuals to plan ahead, build community support, improve their understanding, and provide comfort in talking about these important topics.

GROWING AND SUSTAINING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES: 2023 FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

Covenant Health is proud to continue our mission to seek out and respond to the palliative care needs of vulnerable populations. Following two decades of establishing an international reputation, Covenant Health launched the Palliative Institute in October 2012 with a strategic plan to “be leaders in robust palliative and end-of-life care and advocate for it to be an essential part of the health system.”

©Covenant Health Palliative Institute (2024)

Publication date: April 2024

This publication may be reproduced without permission for personal or internal use only, provided the source is fully acknowledged.

How to cite this document: Covenant Health Palliative Institute (April 2024). Growing and Sustaining Compassionate Communities: 2023 Forum Summary Report.

To obtain additional information, please contact the Covenant Health Palliative Institute.

Address: Covenant Health Palliative Institute, One Twelve Campus, Suite 650, 10130 112 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2K4

Phone: 780-735-9637

E-mail: Palliative.Institute@covenanthealth.ca

Website: <https://www.CompassionateAlberta.ca>

Social Media: Twitter: [@CHPalliative](https://twitter.com/CHPalliative)
LinkedIn: [@Palliative Institute](https://www.linkedin.com/company/palliative-institute)
Facebook: [/Covenant-Health-Palliative-Institute](https://www.facebook.com/Covenant-Health-Palliative-Institute)

Disclaimer: Participation in the forum was voluntary. Quotations and attributions are anonymous. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect Covenant Health, the participants nor institutional stakeholders.